

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 924

By Cooper

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Judge Greg Mathis.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly take great pleasure in recognizing a gentleman whose personal commitment to social and equal justice is unsurpassed and whose humanity and forthrightness distinguish him from his peers; and

WHEREAS, Judge Greg Mathis, the longest-serving African-American male host on television, is best known for his Emmy-winning courtroom television show, *Judge Mathis*, which is now in its twenty-third season; and

WHEREAS, Judge Mathis's skillful use of social commentary, humor, and humanity in providing resolution and counseling to litigants before the bench has catapulted him to the forefront of a national dialogue about real issues facing contemporary society; and

WHEREAS, a unique role model and personality, Greg Mathis is always a judge but never judgmental, as he seeks to find a positive solution for the direst situations; and

WHEREAS, Judge Mathis's inspirational gang-to-gavel story began with his association with gangs as a youth; a high-school dropout, he spent time in jail and then, as a promise to his dying mother, turned his life around; and

WHEREAS, Judge Mathis then attended college, earned a law degree, and became the youngest judge in Michigan history, serving as a Superior Court judge for Michigan's 36th District; and

WHEREAS, a positive role model for urban youth and a lifetime supporter of equal justice, Judge Mathis founded the Mathis Community Center in his hometown of Detroit and has assisted thousands of youth with his nonprofit agency, Young Adults Asserting Themselves, an

agency that provides career, business start-up, and job opportunities, as well as job training and college enrollment assistance; and

WHEREAS, Judge Mathis began his career in public service as a college student when he led voter registration campaigns on campus, while also working nights at McDonald's as a swing-shift manager; after graduating from college in 1983, he continued to work as an advocate for equal justice with Reverend Jesse Jackson's PUSH Excel, which he currently serves as chairman; and

WHEREAS, in November 2018, Judge Mathis organized a caravan from Detroit to Flint, Michigan, where he led a rally challenging Flint city officials to provide potable water for their citizens, and then delivered 10,000 bottles of water to the people affected by the crisis; he also campaigned extensively to heighten public awareness of Flint's cause and appeared on national and local programs in support thereof; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, the City of Detroit named a street in his childhood neighborhood in honor of Judge Mathis in recognition of his longstanding support of his hometown; and

WHEREAS, Judge Mathis will soon be awarded a star on Hollywood's "Walk of Fame," an honor bestowed on luminaries of the entertainment industry; and

WHEREAS, Judge Mathis has received numerous awards and two honorary doctorates; still, the prestigious Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Legal/Courtroom Program he received in 2018 holds a special place in his heart; and

WHEREAS, from jail to Judge, Greg Mathis continues to inspire and assist urban youth who are working to overcome their circumstances to find success in life, and he is most worthy of our approbation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and recognize Judge Greg Mathis for his lifetime of commitment

to equal justice under the law as a judge and a community activist, salute his exemplary career on the bench and in television, and congratulate him upon the continued success of his television program, *Judge Mathis*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.